

# Has Served Forty-Two Years in One Office

By EDWARD W. THOMSON



COL. GEORGE T. DENISON

"The Roosevelt of Canada," in his eightieth year.

Ottawa, Ontario, December, 1919.

COLONEL GEORGE TAYLOR DENISON'S eightieth birthday was enthusiastically celebrated in Toronto, and by very many thorough Canadians elsewhere in and outside of this Dominion, on the thirty-first day of last August, 1919. He was then, as now, going strong, not only as chief police magistrate of Toronto, which he has been during the past forty-two years, but as public speaker, lecturer, historian, essayist, encourager of true Canadianism. Also encourager of the spirit which makes not only for Unity of the Britishries of the world but for harmony between all its English-speaking folk as the most hopeful of methods for promoting Peace on Earth and Good Will among human kind. Moreover, he is this year contributor of the most interesting and amusing of reminiscences that ever appeared in any Canadian magazine. In short, the Colonel, being more than eighty years young, is vigorous, cheerful, and helpful all round.

To one who has lifelong known and revered him, though often differing publicly from his political course on minor points, he wrote on June 10, 1917, "Very many thanks for your kind letter of sympathy to me on my dear son's death. It is a sad thing, but there is the consolation that he died a glorious death for his king and country. I trust and pray that your son and grandson may come through the war safely and with honors." As they did, the former, a captain in the United States Army, the latter a flyer of the British Royal Air Force. Surely this evinced family internationalism of the right kind.

That letter of Colonel Denison may well remind many Americans of public utterance of Colonel ex-President Roosevelt on the death of his beloved son, Quentin. If the same Americans knew Colonel Denison well they might smile approval of the following anecdote: Some years ago a United Stateser (we old-fashioned Canadians claim to be *Americans* just as truly as are the native-born of the Republic), one who knew Colonel Denison's career pretty well, said to a Canadian, "Denison is the Roosevelt of Canada." "No, you've got it wrong end first," replied the Kanuck, "Roosevelt is the Denison of the Republic."

In fact the two curiously resembled each other in many points of character. They were alike in active courage, in public spirit, in contempt of mercenary considerations, in liking for combat, in tenacity, in the wide range of their intellectual interest, in voluminous excellent speaking and writing designed to do practical good, in bearing no malice against honest opponents, in continual activity, and in that Joy of Life which goes with or inspires such activity. If Theodore Roosevelt had continued to be chief police commissioner of New York, as he was in 1895-7, and if he had written and spoken and soldiered from that position without ever becoming politician or President, his deeds would have tallied still more precisely with those of Colonel G. T. Denison. Do permit me to show enthusiasm for both of them! I have known our Canadian colonel for some sixty years; and I do hereby boast that one of the very last letters signed in his own hand by your great Roosevelt, was a letter of thanks to me for some verse I had written about him!

Though Colonel Denison has been so long police magistrate, and though his work in that office has been notable for wisdom and justice, for such merciful fair play and yet severity on occasion that even the "criminal classes" worship "His Worship," for such penetrating shrewdness that he has often correctly perceived innocence in accused persons against whom the police had accumulated damning evidence, yet there is almost absurdity in speaking of him as "police magistrate of Toronto." Just so there would be an absurdity in referring to Colonel Roosevelt as police commissioner of New York. Why? Because they

alike did such an immense volume of various work utterly disconnected from police business.

A correct list of the titles of Colonel Denison's books, pamphlets, magazine essays, histories, and the learned societies to which he belongs would fill a column of THE DEARBORN INDEPENDENT. In 1877 he won a prize given by the Czar of Russia for the best History of Cavalry, which he was the more competent to write because of his intimate acquaintance with the deeds of the Northern and Southern cavalry in the Civil War. That book was translated into about all the European languages, and adopted by the British and some other services as a textbook for officers. The Colonel's book on "The Struggle for Imperial Unity," written always from the Canadian point of view, is not only famous, but as interesting to United Statesers as to British Englishries.

Though he was often charged with hostility to the Republic, he has ever recognized and proclaimed that the Revolutionary War was brought on by the stupid tyranny of the very German George III, and his pig-headed ministers. He has ever despised alike every rascal vote-seeker in the Empire and in the Republic who sought to exacerbate the animosities resulting from the Schism of our English-speaking race.

In good will to our French-Canadians he has ever been clearly pronounced, being moved by the very spirit of Canada's first Premier, Sir John MacDonald, who said: "The French Canadian is my brother," even as his great opponent, Edward Blake, declared: "What a majority owes to a minority is not bare justice, but justice heaped up and running over." In dislike of the petty Canadian politicians who incessantly try to excite hatreds of race and greed in this Dominion, the Colonel has ever been unhesitating.

Let me tell you a little true story illustrative of his good humor. Being at one time in charge of the editorial columns of the Toronto Globe I wrote and gave leading place to a screed poking fun at the Colonel because, about 1889, he had spoken rather warmly of the military prowess Canadians might evince if "Annexation," our bugaboo then, were forcibly attempted by the Republic. The editorial sketched jocularly the terror of Generals Sherman, Sheridan, etc., on their undergoing, after reading the Colonel's speech, a nightmare vision of his marching on Washington at the head of the Canadian militia, then a very feeble force. He came down to the Globe office that day, shook hands with me, and laughingly congratulated The Globe on the article; one to which, by the way, he alludes in his great book "The Struggle for Imperial Unity."

One very notable element in the Colonel's utterances and writings on behalf of the great cause of active friendship between all English-speaking peoples has been his strenuous lambasting of sundry kings, premiers, governments, politicians, editors, etc., of England; for their stupid persistence in contempt for Canadians, and their long suffering of grievances from Westminster. He never truckled to the like, as many minor Canadians, usually immigrant here, have ever done. He especially resented, as did all we of United Empire Loyalist stock (Tories who migrated to create Canada after the Revolutionary War), the long truckling of England to Washington in respect of Canadian disputes with the United States. Nowadays we can see how wise was London to shun quarrel or war with the States, even at some temporary annoyance to Canadians. The "Schism of the Race" surely tends to be healed, thanks to United States' valorous participation in the Great War. But it was a sore matter for real Canadians, who had founded this Dominion and held it loyal to the Crown contrary to their own pecuniary and trade interests, to be regularly snubbed by London's frequent insistence that the Beaver should lie still and be skinned by the Eagle, lest his beak and claws should be turned against the Lion. Colonel Denison never failed to twist the Lion's tail usefully in such instances. He knew that one must sometimes be cruel in order to be really kind to his beloved.

Also, Colonel Denison, though certainly Canada's most persistent and effective fighter for Imperial Unity, or the Voluntary Empire, was never among the poor creatures whose prime design was to attain to knighthood, or a barony, or any kind of "imperial honors." Some of the most despicable wretches stirring in our politics were notoriously influenced by no other longing, after they had gotten money enough to entertain social ambitions. Some who began, to my certain knowledge, as Annexationists, gradually shifted till they became Ultra-Jingoese, plainly in hope to achieve titles, which a few of them got for their long subservency.

But Colonel Denison was born and bred a gentleman, in the true sense of that much misused term. His motives were ever noble. It is a fact, though he never let it be published or generally known, that he was offered knighthood on four occasions by as many successive governors-general. He silently refused every time, specially requesting that the fact of the offers should not be disclosed. Why this secrecy! I happen to know that. In the first place he had been, like his father and some other Denisons, so long known as

"Colonel Denison" that he relucted to change from that familiar title. Secondly and finally his sense of honor and of duty to his cause, that of Imperial Unity, was so delicate that he would not let it be known that he had refused knighthood lest his refusal should seem to reflect on those Canadians accused of having turned to Imperialism in sole longing to achieve knighthood. Was not that gentle consideration for all concerned?

Often remembrance of Colonel G. T. Denison comes to me along with the thought that he has ever been and is now one of the very happiest of men. He has fought the good fight steadfastly. He has lived to see his own dear Canada—he was ever a "Canada First" man—duly appreciated in London, Washington, the world over. He has seen much evidence of a profound reconciliation between the English-speaking nations; and that was essentially what he always strove and hoped for. Everybody who knows him loves and respects him. His living posterity are numerous and honorable. He has troops of friends and admirers who never saw him. His name is honored highly in Great Britain as in Greater Britain. We all hope and expect that he will live happily and actively to be at least one hundred years young. And when he "crosses the River" he must surely hear, like Christian, "the trumpets sounding for him on the other side."

## To Direct Women's Campaign



(C) Harris & Ewing

MRS. JOHN OLIVER SOUTH

MRS. SOUTH recently was appointed chairman of the women's division of the Republican National Committee. She will direct the campaign to get women to vote the Republican ticket in the coming Presidential election.

Mrs. South is the daughter of William O. Bradley, Kentucky's first Republican governor and one of the two Republicans sent to the United States Senate by that state.

Mrs. South has been prominent in the suffrage, civic and prohibition movements.

## Bryan's Logic

Assuming certain premises, no one can question the flawless logic of the following by William Jennings Bryan:

"When it comes time to select delegates to represent the United States in the League of Nations, provision should be made for their election by popular vote, in five districts, so that all sections of the country will be represented. They should act subject to instructions by Congress and the people. They should have no power to vote for war without special instructions from the people, at an election called for that purpose."

There are three propositions in this paragraph. We wish we could see a single chance that any one of them will ever be adopted as the practice of nations.

—Advocate of Peace.

## Mere Words

Other than French people are subject to the pert criticism of his countryman as made by Premier Clemenceau of France to an American correspondent at the Peace Conference.

"You know," said the famous "Tiger," "the French are an oratorical people. They will get up and say something and say it with great force and fervor—and then assume it is done."